

# Barriers to women in leadership



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## COMPILER'S COMMENTS

As a budding scholar, I always read acknowledgments in the books that college professors write. Men usually thank their intellectual mentors. Women invariably thank family members for giving them time to research and write. The editors of a recently published book about Amish and Mennonite women, in which I have an essay, specifically thank their mothers for childcare and other support.

It is striking to me how women of my generation in academia are indebted to family for childcare. In truth, the wider work I am able to do in the world is made easier and less guilt-inducing because of the regular care provided to my son by loving grandmothers several days a week and supplemented by a nearby, quality child care center. In this, my friends and I are typical of national trends. Half of all children not cared for by their mothers at home are most often cared for by another relative (typically fathers or grandmothers). This is followed by 30 percent of children who attend day care centers, and 20 percent who are cared for by nannies.

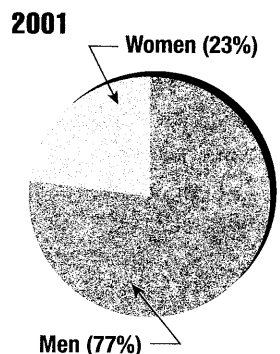
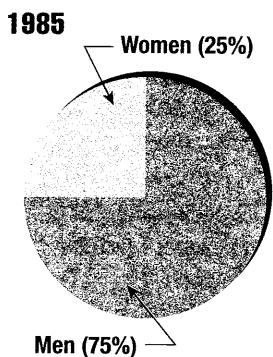
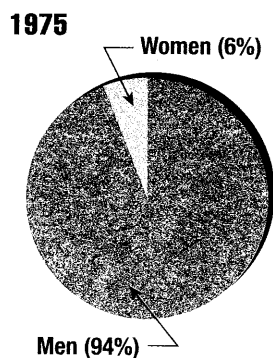
Having the assurance of quality care for one's children is one important consideration when we look at women in leadership, which is the focus of this issue of *Women's Concerns Report*. In this issue, we examine several barriers to women in leadership:

- Work-family balance and the struggle to weigh paid employment with childcare responsibilities

- Traditional biblical understandings and societal expectations of gender roles for men and women
- The ways in which most employers structure work according to white masculine norms that can marginalize women, especially women of color
- Women's traditional leadership roles in different cultures and societies
- Hierarchal power structures and male domination in personal attitudes
- Internalized norms of communication and conflict styles that are highly gendered
- Race and gender norms and role models for women.

Obviously, in an issue on this topic, much has been left out. In 1995 the MCC Executive Council identified a comprehensive list of barriers to women in leadership, which we have reprinted here. In addition, we have chosen to focus much of the content of this issue on our own setting here at Mennonite Central Committee, both because MCC as a workplace environment has much to be proud of including benefits for part-time workers (most of whom are women) and paid maternity and paternity leave and because we are still struggling with how best to recognize and promote women's leadership.

MCC does not have a policy regarding the leadership of women in MCC service or in the church in general. Our goal is to encourage women to take leadership roles



if they have gifts in that area. In practice, many of the highest level leadership roles are filled by men. As in many church organizations, women fill more than 50 percent of positions at MCC, but are disproportionately concentrated in the lower levels of administrative support. In fact, the percentage of women in leadership at MCC is actually somewhat lower than it was in 1985, although women now serve on many U.S. boards in near-equal numbers with men, and over two-thirds of the country representative positions overseas are filled by married couples.

As part of my work at MCC, I have been having conversations with other staff women about sexism and the relative lack of women in positions of leadership, which is as true in the church and non-profit sectors as in corporate business today. Individual acts of sexist behavior are sometimes difficult to identify. As one woman I interviewed said, "Sexism is like a ton of feathers. It's a whole bunch of little lightweight actions of inequality that add up to a ton." Often it is difficult for women to know where sexism stops and internal barriers take over. Many of us are socialized as women to be non-confrontational, so when we encounter

**MCC Upper Level Management:** These graphs show the change in the ratio between men and women in upper level management positions in MCC Bi-national and MCC U.S. headquarters and regions.

The MCC Committees on Women's Concerns believe that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committees strive to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures through which women and men can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *REPORT* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committees on Women's Concerns.

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barriers we ask ourselves, "Is it just me? Am I making this up? Am I just not qualified for leadership?"

Some examples of sexism are mentioned in the articles that follow; many include not recognizing or giving due credit to women's ideas, initiatives and opinions. This is perhaps best illustrated in the struggle over classification/promotion that some women at MCC headquarters have faced. One woman noted, "If I were a man that has contributed what I have to this position, I guarantee you I would be a director. And I expect that it will happen eventually, but I think the delay in that process has been because of some ambiguities about the role of the department [under my management] versus what [my male predecessor] used to do as director of the department." Another woman recalled the sense of unfairness about the principle of being under-classified vis-a-vis her predecessor: "I said, 'This is demoralizing to me doing the job. You can either tell me how I'm not doing it to the same level of satisfaction that my predecessor did it when he was the director, and I will see what I can do about that, or I will quit.' . . . Maybe I didn't communicate some depth of management experience, or whatever. Nevertheless, if you are invited into a position and all your performance evaluations are glowing, then you are doing your job. So I don't know where to go with that. It is just frustrating."

Another theme that comes through in these interviews is the difference that individual men can make as allies to women, even in an environment that can sometimes feel unwelcoming to women leaders. One woman said, "MCC as an organization seems to value logic, order and reason, all these list-making kinds of things, and I don't work that way. Fortunately, I had one supervisor who respected my way of thinking. He knew that if he wanted some creative thinking, he could come to me. I so treasured that I didn't have to be like him. He valued me and my way of thinking. That was a very special gift which is not available from everyone." May we continue to call out and support the gifts among us that women leaders bring.

—Beth Graybill, compiler

**E**ven though this periodical is published by Mennonite Central Committee and we print information about what is happening at MCC, our articles don't often specifically discuss MCC. In this issue, the first three articles address women's experiences working at MCC. All of these differences seemed essential because of the topic we are discussing. This just seemed like the most fair thing to do. We did not want to discuss the continued barriers to women in leadership without being willing to take a look at ourselves. This does not diminish the work that MCC has done for women and families through the work of our Women's Concerns offices in the U.S. and Canada, as well as our work in other departments and around the world. As a matter of fact, all three women who wrote these articles continue to work for MCC and are committed to its mission. This is merely a recognition that all organizations have improvements to make in regards to women in leadership.

To compliment the articles in this issue that discuss women in leadership positions at Mennonite Central Committee, we have included four sets of graphs with informa-

tion about women and men in leadership at MCC. The statistics for these graphs were gathered from Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker, Irene Leaman and Karen Nolt at MCC Bi-national; Justine Foxall at MCC Ontario; and Daphne Thiessen and Marilyn Funk at MCC Canada. I thank them all for their work.

It is also important, when looking at this subject, to acknowledge that white women and women of color do not share the same experiences. Though white women struggle in the workplace because of sexism, they continue to reap the benefits of their race that women of color do not. Women of color are forced to battle both sexism and racism in the workplace. The statistics of people in leadership at MCC indicate that white women continue to receive more opportunities than women of color. At MCC, there have been more white women in positions of leadership than men of color and women of color combined. When we work for more welcoming workplaces for all women in leadership, we must confront both the sexism and racism in that environment.

—Debra Gingerich, editor

**FROM THE**  
*editor*

## Three major barriers

**I**n 1995, Lynette Meck, then the Executive Director of MCC U.S., led executive council members—directors in upper-level administrative positions in a discussion of the reasons why more men than women were in leadership positions at MCC. We identified these three major reasons: traditional Mennonite and biblical teachings about male and female roles, the way work is structured, and societal expectations of women and our roles.

MCC has changed in the past 30 years. More women are on MCC boards. We presently have more solo female country representatives overseas than solo male country representatives. We have more married couples sharing leadership roles

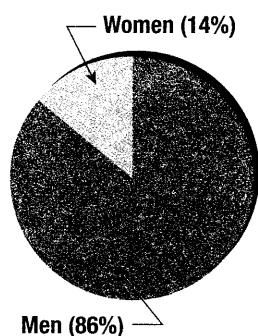
overseas, which will hopefully lead to more women serving in leadership roles when they return to North America. We have flexible hours, part-time positions and jobs people can share. Though all of these jobs are not in leadership positions, they have helped MCC become a family-friendly place to work. Nevertheless, the three barriers are alive and well.

The biblical reasons for restricting women in leadership are easiest to identify; they are not nuanced or subtle. At a church meeting in the past, a colleague from another church group said that she regularly hears men refer to the admonition in I Timothy that "Women are not to have

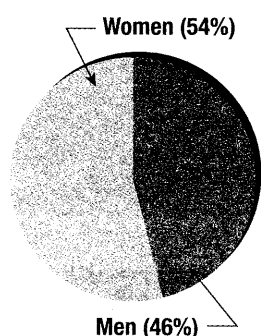
**by Charmayne Denlinger  
Brubaker**

Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker is director of MCC's Human Resources department, her fourth assignment with MCC. Earlier assignments with MCC include "unassigned spouse," writer/editor in Communications and director of MCC's Communications department. She earned her MBA from Penn State Great Valley in 1998.

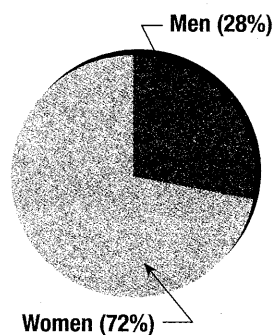
### Upper Level Management



### Middle Management and Technical Support



### Administrative Support and Maintenance



**Classification of MCC Jobs:** These graphs show the percentages of men and women in different level jobs at MCC Bi-national and MCC U.S. headquarters and regions.

authority over men.” She questioned people’s astonishment at the scarcity of women leaders when male leaders have these beliefs.

Biblical teachings about authority are not the only factors influencing who’s selected for leadership positions in the church. It is human nature for leaders to select people with whom they are most comfortable to be colleagues in leadership. As people interact more together, they understand each other in a more personal way and can be better mentors for each other. If they enjoy that work relationship, they’re more likely to select that person for promotion. Because Mennonite men, at least in some parts of North America, are afraid of having people think they are becoming intimate with women, they keep women at arm’s length and are not comfortable with women in the same way they are with men. A past MCC leader took his male department heads out for lunch meetings but never his female department heads. He said he was worried about what people would think if they saw him with a female other than his wife. The women he supervised felt like they had fewer chances for mentoring.

Different communication styles and the structure of leadership positions also keep many women out of leadership in most church agencies. I started in 1989 as a department head at MCC, my first MCC leadership position. Both women and men would tell me that I needed to talk more like a man. Instead of saying, “I think,” or, “In my opinion,” I was told to say, “This is best.” Friends gave me articles that described how most women raise their voices at the end of sentences and don’t sound authoritative. I spent a lot of time writing and talking in a different way so I would be taken seriously. Eventually I got tired of talking like a man and sounding like a “know-it-all.” I remember sitting in a meeting thinking that these men, when they go overseas, learn to listen to and speak Spanish or French or Swahili. Why can’t they learn to listen in a different way when I talk? After that meeting, I decided to talk like myself. How people chose to listen to me became their problem. Two books that helped me understand my dilemma in my first leadership position at MCC were Deborah Tannen’s

books *You Just don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* and *Talking from Nine to Five: How Women and Men’s Conversational Styles Affect Who Gets Heard, Who Gets Credit and What Gets Done at Work*.

It is a bit more difficult to articulate, in the space available, how the structure of work keeps women from leadership positions. Joan Williams’s book *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It* gives a most thorough and helpful analysis. In short, society has divided work into two types: salaried work and family/home work. This division likely began with the industrial revolution. Our culture values salaried work. The ideal worker can work full time and overtime without career interruptions. Ideal workers therefore must have spouses to do their personal work: social life scheduling, nurturing children, caring for parents and other unpaid work. Because women, unlike men, rarely receive such support, they are overwhelmingly excluded from jobs in leadership.

Few women apply for leadership positions at MCC, even when approached directly and encouraged to apply. In the first leadership search I oversaw, there were no female applicants. In the next search, there was one but her experience didn’t match that of the male candidates. For numerous leadership positions, we’ve encouraged women to apply. Of those who responded, nearly all cited family reasons for not wanting to apply.

MCC leadership positions are demanding. Linda Shelly, former director of Latin America and Caribbean programs at MCC, said people always told her that it was good she didn’t have children because of how much she needed to travel. No one made that observation to her male colleagues, who traveled just as much, most of whom were married with children. Could we restructure work, particularly leadership positions, so that both women and men can do both paid work and unpaid home/family/community work as they choose?

Omer, my husband, and I decided to do things differently in our marriage. This grew out of our MCC experience in

Bangladesh and eventually led to my move into leadership at MCC. When we were in Bangladesh in 1978 to 1981, I was an “unassigned spouse.” I was excited to have unstructured time and freedom to explore. Arriving there was a rude awakening. In Bangladesh, women observe *pardah* (seclusion). You didn’t see women in the market place. In the area where we lived, we didn’t see them in the street or in any public places. On the rare occasions when I did venture into the local market alone, I’d see only a woman or two, and they were the women with serious mental illnesses. When Omer and I would go together to visit with a local family, Omer would eat with the men while I waited with the women in the kitchen. I had to learn a very different role. Some of my female friends in the countryside had never even been to the town where we lived a few miles away. It seemed tragic to see these women, who as little girls could run around and play, suddenly required to stay inside their courtyard. They were taught to be afraid of men.

Omer and I wanted to make sure that I didn’t lose my ability to function in public, so on our first vacation I made sure that I went to the bank and dealt with the airlines. I did all of the public and professional things—including shopping—that he was doing for us in Bangladesh. The second year we went to Sri Lanka on vacation. After a few days, I realized that I was sitting in the hotel room waiting for Omer to do all of the public errands. We realized that we had both absorbed the cultural gender roles. We were fitting in because it was too difficult to be odd or improper or for me to be seen as a prostitute or crazy woman.

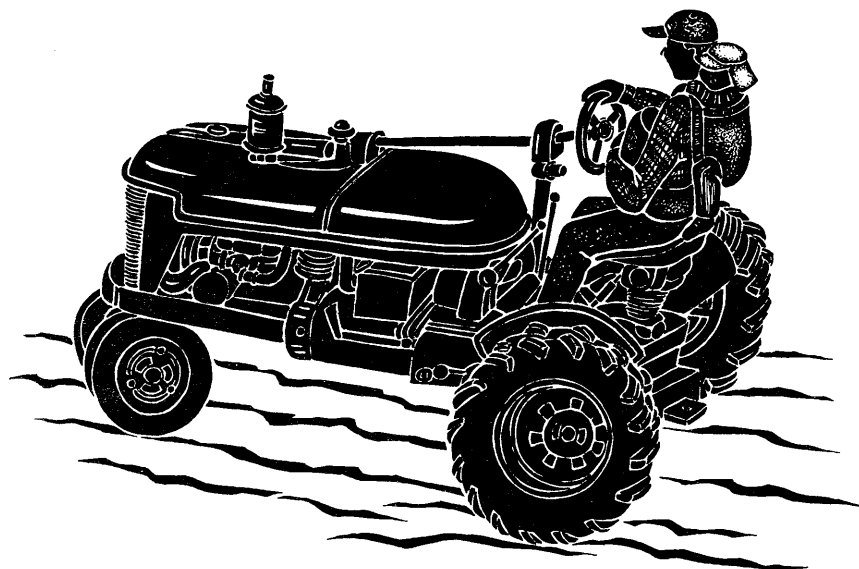
Two incidents during the third year made me realize that we had been there long enough. I remember riding on a ferry and a young Bengali woman from Dhaka—more sophisticated and a little more Western—made eye contact with Omer. I remember wondering who she was and why she was looking at him. I thought of pushing her into the water! I realized then that this was not who I wanted to be. I didn’t want to absorb those cultural norms. The second incident was on our way home on the airplane. It was a full flight, and Omer and I couldn’t sit together. I was stuck

between two men who kept trying to have a conversation with me. I spent the entire flight looking at my lap, feeling hideously uncomfortable, while they tried to sustain a conversation.

When we had children, we decided that Omer would stay home with the boys, and I would do the salaried work. After Bangladesh, a work role was important to me, plus Omer’s farming work was at home. Omer didn’t want to work all day in an office or factory and then come home to do the farm work. We agreed on the option that made us both happy. Quickly we realized how strong the culture is here. Omer was looked on as weird for raising our boys. When he took Alex to register for kindergarten, school officials took him aside and asked him if he was divorced. Another day, he was plowing. He had Alex on his back and Nick in the snuggli, and our neighbor asked if I had died or was seriously ill.

Close friends asked Omer why he was choosing to be at home. They said he should be using his knowledge and training. They cautioned that he would never get a good job with this blank spot on his resume. At times they’d joke with Omer, “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” Since I didn’t see other men rushing to rock the cradle so they could rule the world, I knew their first reaction was the more honest one. A colleague’s husband stayed at home for a year with their children, but he quickly got a job in leadership. He said he didn’t want to have a job with less responsibility because those

**Biblical teachings about authority are not the only ideas influencing who’s selected for leadership positions in the church.**



**Omer, my husband, and I decided to do things differently in our marriage. This grew out of our MCC experience in Bangladesh and eventually led to my move into leadership at MCC.**

jobs were beneath him. He was worth more money than that. Do women say that or think that? Maybe, but not as often as men.

I was only the second person to take maternity leave at MCC. People—usually men with children of their own—would ask me, “Who is taking care of your children?” I always wanted to respond, “Who is taking care of your children?” Instead I’d say that their father was with them. Our society and church expected women to stay home with the children and men to make the money. People didn’t understand why we had chosen something else. We realized that people weren’t free to pick what made sense for them as individuals.

Now, of course, Omer meets more house-dads, and I meet more mothers who work outside the home. Men are setting more boundaries as to how many hours they will travel and work. I read about men refusing promotions because they do not want to uproot their families.

The way we’ve structured work, particularly our expectations of leaders, is unhealthy for men and women. It would be good if people could choose roles that fit them, their skills, abilities and preferences, rather than doing what is expected without examining options. It would be

good if people were not forced to focus either on salaried work or nonpaid family/home/community work.

I believe that expectations can change, people can learn. My sons quickly figured out that Omer and I have different roles than other couples. I remember once when they were little, Alex asked, “Mommy why don’t you bake bread and cookies like Aunt Nancy?” She was a stay-at-home mom. Nick replied, “Well, Mom makes money so we can do things, and that is what Uncle Dean does in their house.” The boys had their own way of realizing that people do things differently. And Alex, who still loves home-cooked food, is now the pie-maker in our house. I taught him how, and he takes pies to his girlfriend’s house and his classmates on special occasions. His crusts are as good as my mom’s.

I hope my sons are not forced into focused, efficient, family-sacrificing, health-compromising work compartments called jobs. And I hope the church can apply the parable of the talents to women as well as to men, so that women do not need to bury the leadership talents God gave them. People should be able to be good stewards of the goodness with which they were created and to choose lives balanced with salaried work and family work. ♦

## Barriers to women of color

by Iris de Leon-Hartshorn

Iris de Leon-Hartshorn is an ordained Mennonite minister and the director of Peace and Justice Ministries of MCC U.S. She is Mexic-Amerindian, married to Leo, the mother of three adult children, and the owner of a golden retriever named Zak.

One of the things I think about regarding barriers to women in leadership is how we gather our information and make decisions. I think women are more willing to acknowledge ambiguity. Sometimes people may feel like we’re not as willing to make decisions, but that is not the issue. It’s wanting to make sure that everyone is included. Sometimes things aren’t the way they seem. Even though there might be written statements that say something is a certain way, our gut and our intuition, and everything else that is

normally not valued, tell us something else. Sometimes women decide to go with our intuition. I think we are often criticized or thought of as poor managers or questioned for why we made certain decisions. A lot of times when I am put in that position, I start to feel unsure about myself, even though at the time I made the decision I felt clear about what I was sensing.

The work place needs to look at more inclusive ways of making decisions. People get frustrated because they want me to make a decision, and I’ll respond, “Well,

I'm going to talk to my department." I've had people say, "But you are the manager, you should make the decision." Yes, I am the manager, and I could make the decision but I choose not to at that time. That is part of the way we operate as a department. That type of decision making process might make people view me as weak or unable to make a decision without consultation. Other people might suggest something about our program, and I'll say that I want to discuss it with my department. Then the insecurity comes in: I wonder if they think I can't make the decision myself because I'm a woman or a person of color. Being inclusive doesn't necessarily mean that I, as someone in leadership, am not going to make the decision. I think that I should be open to hear all the other voices in making that decision. Now, obviously women have different personalities, and for some it may be easier just to make decisions by themselves, but consultation before decision-making seems a more natural style for most women, in my experience.

I also think that women working under women supervisors sometimes feel unsure of their position in the work place. I've had female supervisors and male supervisors. I've often asked myself, with whom have I gotten along better? And to my surprise, many times they have been men. Why is that? When I work under a male I want to know where I stand and I want clear guidelines. Because of internalized sexism, women are socialized to interact with other women in ways that haven't been healthy: competition, mistrust, and dishonest or guarded communication with each other. So I've tried to be really conscious about these dynamics in order to support women and help create a more inclusive work environment. I have to find ways to make it work when women are supervising me. It's not an issue for me as a supervisor overseeing women, but I often wonder how it is at the other end. Lynette Meck was a good supporter of women in leadership when she was the MCC U.S. executive director. She was intentional about it. When Jeannie (another woman of color in leadership) and I first started working at MCC, Lynette became a very good mentor to us. When I had a difficult issue to deal with within the institution, she helped me

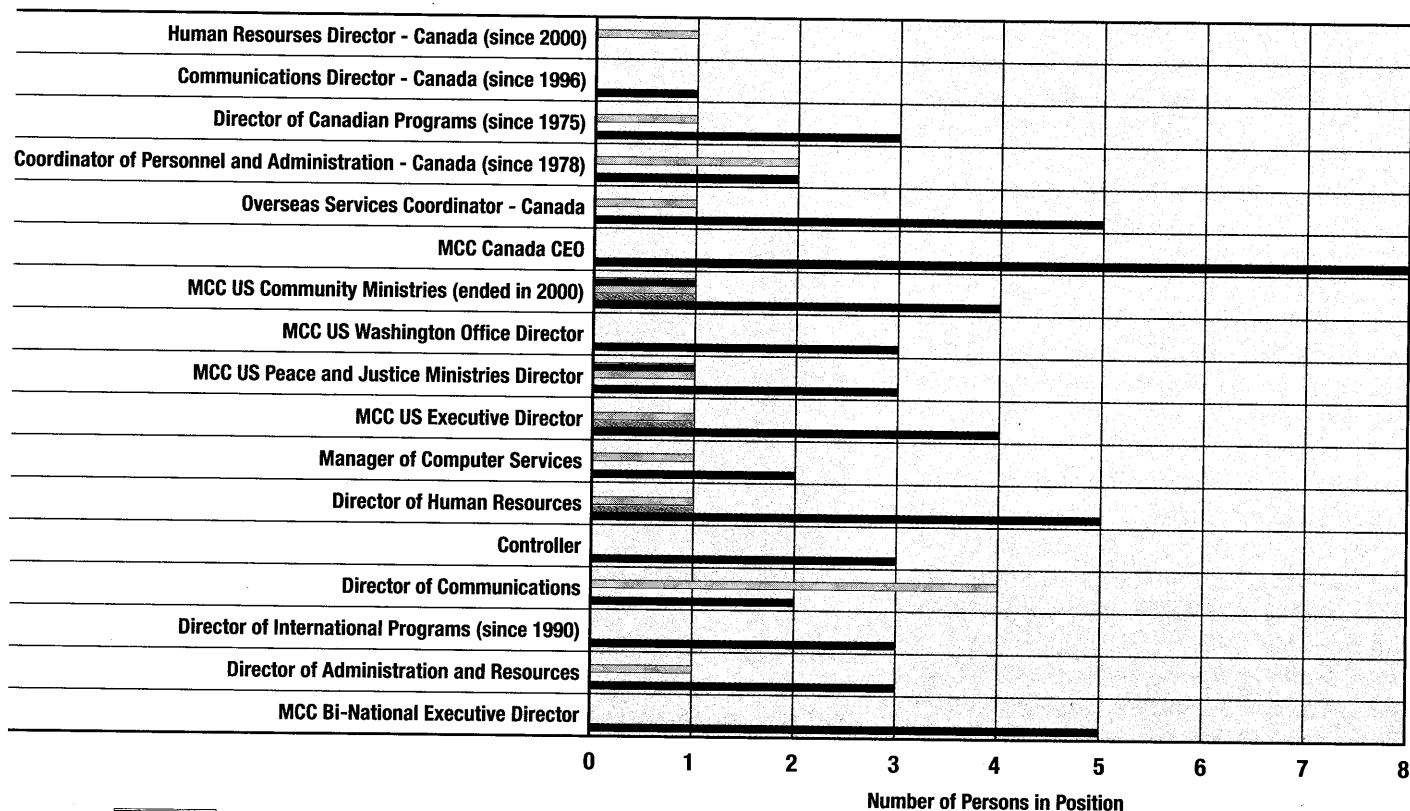


to determine how to respond in the best way. I appreciated her support. I am also part of a support group of women of color that meets periodically.

When communicating, more weight is given when white males speak. When I first came to MCC, we had a management meeting. I stood up and made a suggestion, and it was ignored. Jeannie commented, "It didn't seem like they heard you." So she stood up and said, "Iris brought up this suggestion. I think it is a valid idea, and we need to talk about it." Jeannie also received no response. Ten minutes later, a white male in the institution stood up and made the same suggestion. He was heard and praised for his great idea. Then a man of color stood up and pointed it out. He said, "You know Jeannie and Iris made the same suggestion ten minutes ago and no attention was given to it. Now when a white male says the same thing, all of a sudden it is a great idea." That is very frustrating and many times, as a woman in leadership, I feel that I have a lot of ideas. I have things to contribute, but I am not taken seriously. Often I have to say something several times. Also, it has been really hurtful when men have used some of my ideas and gotten the credit. That's been difficult and demoralizing. But probably in many work places that happens a lot more.

Regarding communication styles, one of the things that I've gotten criticized for is expressing myself with full body language. I don't think that makes me a bad supervi-

**Ten minutes later, a white male in the institution stood up and made the same suggestion. He was heard and praised for his great idea.**



**MCC Leadership since 1971:** This graph lists leadership positions in MCC Bi-national, MCC U.S., and MCC Canada since records started being kept in 1971. Positions that came into existence after this time are indicated on the graph. Positions in the U.S. regions or Canadian provinces are not included. This offers information on the number of people who have filled these positions and how many were white men, white women, women of color and men of color. Three men of color, two women of color, 15 white women and 56 white men have filled these leadership positions.

**I think education is good, but I look at education as making myself a whole person, not as an external way of gaining the system's stamp of approved.**

sor, but is an issue that has been raised with me, and with other women of color. I get emotional, but I can't change that. It is part of who I am, part of my culture, and how I see life. This can become a threat to people that operate more passive aggressively and don't want to tell you what is going on. My tendency is to say, "I WANT to know what is going on." Their tendency is not to tell me what is going on. These dynamics are very difficult.

I also become frustrated when I am expected to speak for all people of color in the institution. A lot of times issues come up around people of color, and for some reason I'm supposed to know the answer or I'm supposed to know how to treat that person. I might be able to give some overall direction about what might be an anti-racist way of dealing with it, but why does it have to be me? White people need to understand the whole anti-racist analysis and figure it out for them-

selves. I always feel put on the spot. What if I give the wrong answer? Not only do I need to make the suggestion but I'll also get all the blame. Many times, people of color, especially women of color, are put in this dangerous position, especially if there are few or no other women of color in the institution. It's kind of a set up, because eventually it is going to blow up. A person can't be right all the time. And even if someone brings a scenario or problem to me, I am not the one working with the people they are working with. I don't know all the bits and pieces of information. I really don't like to be put in that position.

I have taken education for my own personal growth, understanding and knowledge of how I relate to my work and my family. I'm in the Eastern Mennonite University graduate program in conflict resolution. I struggled with whether to be there or not, because I don't want my degree to be used to support education as a way to validate if someone is legitimate



for a leadership position in the church. I'm not against education. I think education is good, but I look at education as a tool for making myself a whole person, not as an external way of gaining the system's stamp of approved. I have mixed feelings about the whole educational process. At one end it seems like I am buying into a system that white males have used to determine whether or not someone is valid, qualified, and able to do the job, without valuing other ways of learning and knowing and being human which come through wisdom, life experiences, and intuition. I'm always wondering if by continuing my education—by thinking that if I get my degree, then I will be qualified—I'm buying into that whole system again. Others have seen education as a way for people of color to move up within the system, and I think it has been a good way for some to do that. I'm probably at a different place. I don't put a lot of weight into someone having a degree.

Another issue for me as a woman of color in a leadership position is the sense that I always have to prove myself. That contributes to overwork. Not only do I have to do my job but I have to work above and beyond my job. I think that women leaders in general, not just women of color, feel this pressure. But I think sometimes women of color feel more pressure. I have given different people in my life permission to tell me when they think I'm overworking myself or when I need time off. I want them to feel free to say it to my face, straight out, because that is what I need to hear—that I need to take time off to take care of myself. One side of my brain says that I believe in that and I think it is important, but then I feel the pressure to prove myself and that just buys right into the problem. I'm better at advocating balance for my supervisees than doing it for myself. I think that part of being a supervisor is to lessen that pressure for staff that I supervise. But for me, I don't feel any lessening of that pressure at this level.

I think we need to revalue the way that women have traditionally made decisions, which is more consensual. We need to see that as positive. We are not weak or indecisive. We make decisions differently. ♦

## The number of barriers

*from a 1995 memo sent by Lynette Meck, former director of MCC U.S. to John A. Lapp, former MCC Executive Director:*

I think it is important that executive council members are aware of the goals and aspirations of high-performing, high-potential women in low-to-mid level positions in the organization. We need to be aware of women's professional goals. We need to actively consider with them where their skills could be put to use in other MCC positions.

There are many smart, capable and committed women in MCC. They may be doing exactly what they want to be doing. Or they may be doing what they are because their choices are limited. We won't know without asking about their long term goals and aspirations.

Of course, this process should be carried out for men and women alike. It's just that we need to work much more deliberately at women's development within the institution because of the overwhelming number of barriers (already identified by the executive council; see list below) that are holding them back.

Here's the list (in no particular order):

- Lack of experience/training/peers
- Male ethos, communication/leadership/management style
- Self-perception of not being a leader
- Lack of interest in leadership positions
- Traditional expectations/theology against women in leadership
- Historically skewed (smaller) pool of "experienced" women
- High work load and travel expectations within MCC
- Women have major child care responsibilities
- Lack of exposure leading to decreased name recognition
- Too few women peers in MCC-Akron
- Lack of female role models
- Women are taught to be caretakers of people not strategy planners, thus not perceived as leaders
- Prejudice/bias/preference
- Old patterns (men as leaders, women as assistants)
- Women's more collaborative rather than directive style of leadership not validated
- Notion of "manager" = maleness
- Perceived difficulty for women to be mentored by men and maintain platonic relationship
- Lack of acceptance of women leaders from others
- Lack of training/qualifications

# Taking leadership in the Middle East

by Jan Janzen

Jan Janzen serves as co-director for MCC's Middle East department with her husband, Rick. She lives with her family in Saskatchewan.

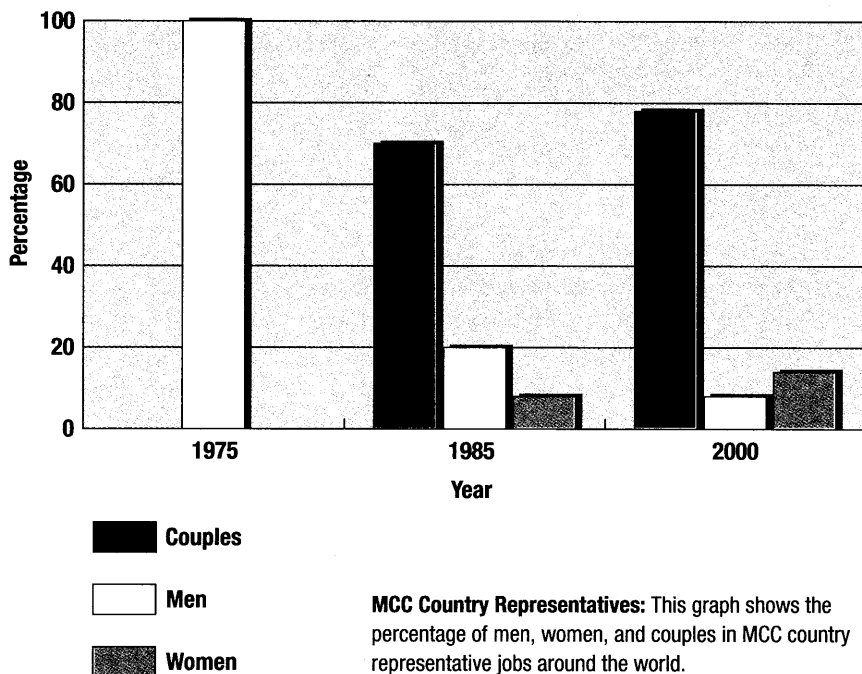
**Within the first year, bishops, priests, and other church leaders would telephone or come to the office and ask for me.**

**W**hen we went to the Middle East, I was told by many people including those at MCC headquarters and former North Americans who had served in the Middle East, that I must ready myself for being a silent woman, with few rights and few places to exercise the leadership that came with the position as a Country Representative. My husband Rick, I was told, would always be the one who would be addressed and referred to as "the boss," even though our position was shared. I was prepared for this. I was ready to see how the culture worked and how I would eventually fit in.

In the process of our work division, it became evident that my skills were more in line with working directly with the local church clergy. I was told by local staff and MCCers that this would not work. Well, they were misguided in their thinking. I have to give much of the credit to Rick. When partners called and asked for Rick, he would always greet them kindly but then excuse himself. He would say that

this was my department and that I would take care of their needs. Within the first year, bishops, priests, and other church leaders would telephone or come to the office and ask for me. They knew I was the one doing the work pertaining to them, and it did not seem to be a problem. Of course, they would always tell me to greet Rick for them, but never in our seven years in the Middle East did I feel like an outsider or not worthy of my position because I was female.

I believe we don't give people enough credit for adjusting to something new or different. The Middle East has got to be close to the top of the list of societies built on male hierarchy, but except for a few exceptions, I have nothing but good to say about my experiences with men in the Middle East. It took patience, energy and a great deal of humor, but it was an experience that I highly value. I learned much about being open and accepting, just as they had been to me. ♦



# Women can be chiefs

I come from the Chokwe tribe. In that tradition, my mom could have been a chief in the village as head of the family. She has cousins, but if it came to choosing the chief in the village on her side of the family, she would have the priority unless she declined and gave the name of her son or another relative. That has made me think about the whole idea of traditional culture and leadership in the village. I always understood that women had a lot of power in my culture. Women had a voice, although the person who carried out the public voice was often a man—the chief in the village. In many cases if the chief's wife was not in agreement, the chief would change his mind. I am discovering more and more about how women played a major role in the Chokwe culture, as seen in the tradition where women were chiefs in the village. This made me think about how we have talked about the role of the women in the church. Maybe we have put too much emphasis on the laying of hands by the elders and forget the fact that those gifts were given by God. The elders were the people in leadership who were chosen to recognize the gifts in Timothy. That is why we put a lot of emphasis on it. But we forget the fact that the gifts came from God to Timothy but were recognized by his elders. So what happens between that and when the gift is exercised? Who comes in between to make it an obstacle? To me that is what the church should be discussing when it comes to the use of gifts. When I have discussed this with my mother, I see how much influence my mother has had on the lives of others. We did a study once in Kajiji where I grew up. I was teaching at a nursing school and asked the nursing students to go into the community to ask people who had made a big impact in their lives. Amazingly, more than 60 percent of the people that they talked to gave the name of my mother. My dad was the pastor. My dad was the district minister, but he was not the one that people mentioned. He was a very strong man. He was a very strong leader and a visionary, but the impact on people's lives was from my mom. She was a different kind of leader.

Today women have gone to work as nurses, teachers and new leaders in countries like Congo. We have had a lot of women teachers, and they were my Bible teachers. They mentored me in my spiritual life. There were female MCC workers who taught me English but also were my Sunday school teachers. They helped me in my spiritual formation. They were women but they were doing the work as Christians. In North America they were not necessarily accepted as people who could play a leadership role, but when they were overseas they were able to work without any problems.

The reality was that missionary women had much impact on the lives of student young people. These women were going to the villages also. They did a lot of the women's work. Spiritual nurturing is not necessarily done by someone who is

as told to Beth Graybill  
by Pakisa Tshimika

Pakisa Tshimika works for the Menonite World Conference. He lives in Fresno, California.



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preaching in the pulpit all the time. No, the nurturing that really makes us strong in our faith happens during those hours we spend in Sunday school class or in the bible study groups. Most of the bible study groups I can remember were led by women. In high school we also had male North American teachers who taught Sunday school class, and that is also important to recognize.

What about North American missionary women who had been gifted by God in certain ways and then went back to the North American churches and wanted to use their gifts? I'm not defending people who just want to be ordained for the sake of being ordained just like the same way I would not do it for men. I'm talking about people who have the gift that God has given them and then the church has tried to crush them. I think that is not listening to God's voice. I have friends and colleagues who have a hard time accepting women's leadership in any position. The closest we have come was to say we recognize the gifting in each person, but we as

a Mennonite Brethren Conference have not agreed on women as senior pastors in the church.

Apparently, we don't recognize the leadership of women because of the issue of ordination of women. That is a big issue for many people. I personally think that it is immaterial. I asked my mom where she was when my dad was ordained. She said that she was next to him. I asked if some people put their hands on her head. She said that they did. So what makes my dad more ordained than her? To the young leaders today, I ask the same question. As a matter-of-fact, if we question whether or not we should ordain women, we should also ask ourselves why we ordain anybody in the way we do. I think missionaries have transferred some of the issues from North America to other countries. I wonder if the North American Mennonites would have recognized the fact that in the Chokwe tribe women have been chiefs. If they would have known that, what would have happened to the concept of women taking leadership in the church? I wonder if that would have changed their position. ♦

## Barriers in our own attitudes

by Dorothy Gish

Upon graduation from Greenville College, Dorothy Gish taught first grade in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania before going to Zambia to be Headmistress of Macha Girls School for the next 6 and a half years. She then earned both graduate degrees from Penn State, separated by a two year VS term in Zambia. She served on the faculty at Penn State prior to coming to Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania where she taught and served in a number of administrative positions. She is currently serving on a number of boards, doing consulting and enjoying travel.

**C**onstricting biblical interpretations, hierarchal power structures, male domination and the "old boys' network" were among the things which came to my mind when I first began to think about this assigned topic. But as I sat down to write the article, I experienced a revealing "aha" moment: the greatest barrier to us as women in leadership may well be our own attitudes.

Admittedly there are women who are determined to get ahead and move to the top for their own sake and/or in order to prove that women can do it. While I am happy for their successes, to me such an approach feels aggressive and self-aggrandizing. Thus, this article is not addressed to such persons but to those women whose gifts and competence are identified as they do their duties faithfully and well. Consequently they are aware of or afforded new avenues of service. Given such opportuni-

ties there are at least three self-imposed barriers which will hinder their effectiveness: competence assessment, role confusion and consciousness raising.

In North American society, as in most others, males expect to be the authority figures and to succeed. Almost any informal gathering will reveal that men define themselves by what they do, women by who they are. While men look for a job that will utilize their skills and provide opportunities for advancement, such criteria often do not play a major role in women's employment decisions. They are more apt to take a position where they are comfortable rather than one which is stretching and offering the possibilities for new challenges. Indeed they rarely search for or apply for such. Even when offered that kind of opportunity as a result of their performance and/or experiences, they often do not deem themselves competent

enough to accept. Thus a lack of appropriate self-confidence and/or fear of failure limit their future growth and service.

Not only do we each need to do a realistic assessment of our abilities and open ourselves to stretching experiences, we also need to help other women do the same. I go to a large church which, like most churches, is at least 50 percent female. Recently, the church board had three openings. With nine continuing members, only two of whom were women, the nominating committee—composed of four women and two men—chose three men for those openings! What a painful reminder of the need for women to recognize and affirm each others skills by using the opportunities they have to open doors for other women.

For those of us who do take the risk and venture into new paths, lack of role definition can sabotage our effectiveness. The best antidote is to recognize that whether at our job or serving on a board or a committee, we are not there because we are female but because of the skills and experiences we bring to that setting. Realizing that the different opinions, ideas, approaches and views we bring are important will keep us from prefacing our contributions with an apology or other forms of self-deprecation.

Appropriate role definitions in professional settings means we need to define ourselves in terms of those skills which are different from the feminine skills we employ in personal settings. For example, we need to resist the temptation to be a “girl Friday” for the group. We should not feel obligated to serve the men coffee, bring goodies to eat or be railroaded into being the secretary. Each of those activities is good, but they are not appropriate in a professional setting unless it is a situation where each person, regardless of sex, takes turns doing them. An example of role appropriate behavior would be to use work time and meeting breaks for issue-oriented discussions rather than personal chit-chat.

A second role-related issue is that of knowing when and what to personalize. In professional or work settings, it is far too easy for us as women to forget that when someone disagrees with what we propose, they are disagreeing with our ideas not with us. An appropriate response is to explain our



suggestions or to request specific criticism. Withdrawing and concluding that they do not like us or that they are attacking us personally is neither appropriate nor helpful. Free and open questioning and discussion of implications, concerns and disagreements are essential to good decisions. Since we have an equal responsibility with the men to ensure that the best possible decisions are made, we should not withhold our thoughts and ideas nor should we expect them to be uncritically accepted.

A reality that all women in leadership face is the need for consciousness-raising of even well-meaning men and sometimes, women. Perhaps an example from my own experience can help illustrate this point. The senior administrative team of which I was a member was leaving our bi-weekly, two-hour breakfast meeting deep in discussion about the final item on our agenda. As the first and only female member, I had an equal voice, and my sugges-

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tions were given equal consideration. However, when our group passed the men's room on our way out, they all excused themselves but requested that I wait so we could conclude the discussion. As I waited I heard them carrying on the discussion and reaching a conclusion. When they emerged, I asked why they had wanted me to wait since they had concluded the business in a setting where I was excluded. Their chagrin confirmed what I had assumed; namely, that they were so used to doing business in that setting that they hadn't stopped to think that I wasn't there. If I had ignored the situation, they would not have been aware of it and would have continued that exclusionary behavior.

Almost any woman who has ever served as part of a largely male group will be able to recount "plop" experiences: i.e. those times when she has made a suggestion only to have it receive no response but minutes later when essentially the same suggestion is made by a man it is warmly

received and affirmed. I believe that those situations indeed call for consciousness-raising but it cannot be done with any kind of defensive approach or a superior attitude. To be effective each woman must decide for herself how she can best and most comfortably deal with such situations. What works best for me is affirming the man for more effectively expressing what I had been trying to convey a few minutes prior.

Determining how to counter sexist approaches, developing situation-appropriate role definitions, and gaining a sense of confidence in our skills are things that no one else can do for us. They are things we must do for ourselves. The first step is to acknowledge our need to overcome these self-restricting barriers. Seeking assistance and/or support from others is then helpful as we work together to deal with the many overt as well as covert barriers to leadership which Christian women admittedly still face. ♦

# Work-family balance

by Beth Graybill

Beth Graybill works half time as MCC U.S. Women's Concerns Director. She is a part-time college professor of women's studies, as well as a wife and mother of a four-year-old son.

**A** headline in the student newspaper where I teach part time proclaimed, "Campus director responds to calling as stay-at-home dad." The director of student activities had resigned in order to move out of state for his wife to take a job at another college. He is quoted as saying, "For the last five years she's been at home with the kids, and she finally called my bluff and asked if I wanted to switch roles. I'm off to be a stay-at-home dad." Interesting, I thought. How often do you see a headline like that? Perhaps times are changing. Now that some men are choosing to stay home with children, will more mothers be freed to accept leadership positions in the paid workforce? And more important, will we begin to place more value on childcare and homemaking skills if they are being done by men?

Studies by Arlie Russel Hochschild and others document that working mothers continue to work what amounts to a "second shift" of domestic duties at

home, experiencing a leisure deficit and time bind far greater than do fathers in the paid workforce. The women's movement has been relatively successful in supporting women's participation in the workforce, but it has been strikingly unsuccessful in encouraging men's participation in household chores and child care at home. Writer Ann Crittenden goes so far as to say that women without children have achieved near-parity with men in the workforce. It is now motherhood, not gender, that determines inequality. Crittenden calls this the "mommy tax." She argues that the principal distinction between "women's work" and "men's work" is that men are paid for most of the work they do and women who are mothers are not.

According to Crittenden, because unpaid childcare is not counted as labor, individual women lose out on Social Security benefits, status, and income from the paid labor force. Mothers who are divorced,

widowed, or unmarried are particularly at risk, which accounts for the disproportionately high representation of women in poverty. Recent Census data that shows a drop from 59 percent to 55 percent of mothers of infants in the paid workforce only holds for white, middle-class women who can afford it. Not every woman has the choice to stay home with her child/ren.

My own formerly egalitarian marriage underwent cataclysmic shifts when our son was born after 13 years of DINK-status (double-income, no kids). The unspoken assumptions that his care was primarily my work coupled with the relative invisibility and time-consuming nature of many routine childcare tasks created untold stress in our marriage. My son is now four, and we are just beginning to recover. I have pushed for my husband to have greater involvement in our son's care, and he has pushed me to let him do it his way, even if it means my son's regular bath gets skipped some nights in favor of discount shopping excursions they do together. We are still negotiating some household tasks and have hired out some of the routine cleaning and home repair tasks, resolving some of the marital tension two working parents feel but adding some class-based guilt.

I interrupt the writing of this article because it is time to run over to my child's daycare and give him his antibiotic, which, according to the daycare policy, needs to be given by a parent. Last week I stopped by the daycare mid-morning to give my son an inhaler treatment for his asthma. I don't know any working fathers who do this, so it strikes me as part of women's "second shift" activities. I know I am lucky to have a job that allows flexibility to arrange my schedule to do this. But like many women who juggle primary parenting and paid employment, I feel some anxiety and guilt about the mix. As Joan Williams points out, women feel guilty, even though most of us are doing a lot more family work than men, because men compare themselves to their fathers who did very little, whereas women compare themselves to their mothers who did virtually everything.

In fact, family life is so important that men need to have more involvement in it. Writers like Coltrane, Williams and

Deutsch document that children are better served when both parents are involved with childcare. I know that is true for my son. And studies suggest that most men want to be much more involved, but feel constrained by bread-winning. Mary Francis Berry found in one study that 40 percent of fathers said they would quit their jobs if they could in order to spend more time with their children.

Jobs that demand time away from family on a regular basis are not good for men OR women. Women are less likely to accept high-profile, high travel positions. It is simply harder for most mothers to travel because few of us have someone at home full time with our child/ren that these positions require, although there are some examples I know of this arrangement. It may also be harder for "Mr. Moms" at home with young children to find the support networks that are more open to stay-at-home mothers.

Much of the literature on working mothers notes their perceived stigma in the eyes of employers—needing time off for family emergencies and doctors' visits, an unwillingness to work overtime, etc. Feminist writers like Williams and Estrich suggest we recognize the qualifications that women gain through shouldering the primary care-giving responsibilities. These include: a seriousness of purpose; the necessity to use time well; the ability to multi-task; and what Williams calls "family executive skills (from locating

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suitable resources to coordinating schedules), and the ability to sustain the complex social relationships associated with childhood (with friends, parents, teachers, and so on).” These skills, they argue, make working mothers better employees, not worse.

Assuming that we want to address issues of work-family balance, how do we work at it? I think there are both individual/personal steps and organizational ones. Authors Nick Stinnett et al give ideas for building a stronger family that may foster greater quality, if not quantity, of family time. One of my favorite ideas from his book is to plan “appreciation nights,” when everyone around the table says something they like about each other. Stinnett notes that “the need to be appreciated is one of deepest psychological needs we all have,” and that such occasions get the family in the habit of looking for good qualities in each other. Author Stephen Covey recommends the development of a family mission statement, jointly authored, that states what is important to your family and helps orient the values around which paid employment will revolve. Scott Coltrane, while arguing for men’s greater involvement at home, notes that women may have to lower their cleaning standards—and men may have to raise theirs—as couples come to see domestic work as shared labor. Anne Meyer Byler, who leads “Parenting for Peace and Justice” workshops in Indiana, passed on a grid that lists each individual household chore for couples to systematically talk through and negotiate responsibility for, as they may also organize the weekly schedule of childcare. My only acquired wisdom on work-family balance, in which I am still a novice, is to coordinate schedules and plan ahead.

Personally, I find myself resonating to the idea of a “Parents’s Bill of Rights,” for which Cornel West and Sylvia Ann Hewlett advocate in their book, *The War Against Parents*. They propose the following national initiatives:

- Government legislation forbidding discrimination against parents (e.g. not being penalized as workers when they must take time off work for family illnesses or emergencies);

- government tax incentives to encourage employers to adopt family-friendly policies that target the time crunch, which may include such initiatives as compressed work weeks, flextime, job-sharing, tele-commuting, benefits for part-time work, or on-site daycare;
- legislation allowing workers to take time off instead of extra pay for overtime;
- paid job-protected parenting leave (the current Family and Medical Leave Act allows for 12 weeks unpaid leave, making it unaffordable to working class families).

Hewlett and West also propose an “Index of Parent Well-Being” to set alongside Wall Street indicators as a deeply symbolic national commitment to the work that parents do.

Returning to the college newspaper article, I read on to discover that the newly resigned director-turned-stay-at-home-dad plans to pursue his doctorate in Connecticut. Having recently completed PhD study myself, I know that being a graduate student and being the primary at-home parent are both full-time, often incompatible, occupations. I found myself wondering who was going to stay home when the children were sick, and which spouse would be cleaning up the kitchen late at night. I hope that they will be like some of the “equal sharers” in Deutsch’s study. Perhaps we will know we have arrived when men who stay home with children full time no longer are newsworthy because so many of them are doing it. Perhaps then the story will be those working moms and dads who are vying with each other for the privilege of spending time with their children.

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## Communication and conflict

**T**he gender inequalities that I experienced at a Mennonite institution where I worked were subtle enough that the institution can comfortably continue in its way of operating and claim general support of gender equity. Looking at specific areas though, I found that the forms of communication and conflict used were a barrier to women in leadership.

I was repeatedly told in evaluations that I "talk too much." I understood my "talking too much" to mean that I had opinions about issues that our department was dealing with, that I was consulted by my supervisor, that other staff outside of our department consulted me and took me seriously, and that I worked on issues that a "typical" administrative assistant was not asked to do. Evidence of my understanding of this was that my husband, who was also an administrative assistant, was complimented by the same people for his good ideas and input on a variety of issues. He received written affirmation for his good work and encouragement to move up the ladder.

The atmosphere was not always conducive to different work styles, feminine ones included. I was repeatedly told that I was

appreciated for my ability to speak up, to say things like they are rather than skirt around them. This was a frustrating thing for me to hear because I didn't see myself as communicating in any special way. I just tried to be honest. Therefore, it was clear that I was unique. At times this was good. I was asked to be a part of some things because of my communication style. But in general, I found people talking around issues. Men seemed to be willing to work at difficult situations if it also maintained the male status quo of control. Women in leadership were willing to work at things but ran into walls and the "old boys' network." They communicated "in code." At least I felt like they did as I tried to figure out what people really meant!

I had a couple of friends who were supportive, and we were good listeners for each other. In general though, I found women to be willing to talk about issues but not willing to go about working on them. It felt like they needed male co-workers to make things right, and if the men didn't they became almost subversive. They seemed to expect their male supervisor and others to move in their direction. Maybe it was because they felt powerless

**The author chooses to remain anonymous.**

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**Is this ethnic Mennonite culture or is this men and women in conflict? Since I see Mennonite systems being dominated by males, I have a difficult time separating the two.**

and any movement represented giving more power to their supervisor. I had very positive feedback from a number of male co-workers for my willingness to work at issues with them, and this did not mean that I had to give in to them or always move in their direction. I felt well respected

by directors and staff from other departments that I worked with. I don't think I was working in a masculine way, but I didn't behave in a traditional feminine way either. I just tried not to behave in ways that undermined people. It felt pretty lonely sometimes. If I thought a certain path would lead to undermining someone, I would raise that as an issue. In general, I found men and women skirting issues and not remaining open to working honestly with issues. Often immediately after a meeting, they would use individual power to get done what they really wanted, outside of the actual meetings designed to deal with the issues.

Is this ethnic Mennonite culture or is this men and women in conflict? Since I see Mennonite systems being dominated by males, I have a difficult time separating the two. The book *Gender and Grace* by Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen has shed some very good light on all of this for me. It's a very good book about the male-female conflict and how our lives are impacted by it. To me, it means making clear decisions to develop administrative structures that are intentionally designed to protect us and/or force us to be open about this conflict and at the same time willing to face it and work at it in Christ-led ways. I think it is very important to be intentionally spiritual about anything we do on this or it will continue not to work. ♦

## BOOK REVIEW

by Michelle Armster

Michelle E. Armster is the director of Mennonite Conciliation Service. She moved from Dallas, Texas, to central Pennsylvania to work for Mennonite Central Committee U.S. about two years ago. Until the move, she was active on the anti-racism team of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches. She lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania with her two cats, Diva and Coco.

### Leading Ladies: Transformative Biblical Images for Women's Leadership

Lately, I have been absorbing the strength and wisdom I have found in 19th century African American women autobiographies. Some of the autobiographies are graphic expositions of their losses due to slavery—rape, children, family and life. Others are euphoric chronicles of their spiritual transformations from salvation to sanctification to supplication. Many are exuberant remembrances of their adventures, travels and

journeys. However, all exude the strength and courage of conviction and God's calling. These women—Jarena Lee, Amanda Berry Smith, Zilpha Elaw, et. al.—often stood in stark opposition to the assumptions and expectations of society, patriarchy, religion and racism. Irregardless, the certainty of who they were called by and what they were called to do gives testimony to their unwavering faith and profound leadership.

In *Leading Ladies: Transformative Biblical Images for Women's Leadership*, Dr. Jeanne Porter provides four female biblical

archetypes for women's leadership styles. She affirms traditional female imagery as motifs to analyze women's leadership styles. Dr. Porter defines transformative leadership as "the movement of people toward collective and mutual goals of spiritual growth, higher purpose and empowerment."

The metaphor of the Midwife is wonderfully captured in the biblical narrative of Shiprah and Puah. Defined as "the art, act or process of bringing forth . . .," Shiprah and Puah midwived a resistance that not only protected unborn children but gave birth to "new leaders and new idea."

Miriam, the sister of Moses, was instrumental in leading the "children of Israel" out of the land of Egypt. As part of the leadership team with Moses and Aaron, Miriam provided the talent of assembling people with various ideas, backgrounds and expectations to a dance. The Choreographer "transforms the independent dance of individuals into the graceful, synchronized movement of collective purpose." This leadership skill is often referred to as collaborating.

For me, the most poignant thread is that of the Weaver. In the book of Judges, Deborah rises to become a skillful, calculating and powerful leader for her people. Deborah was able to call upon the natural gifts of her subjects and inspire them to visualize the future. Dr. Porter suggests that the weaver is able to "see beyond the present reality and braids the fibers of a hopeful future."

The Intercessor is depicted through the story of Esther. Esther married outside and up from her family. Resting in the new lap of luxury, she was challenged to speak truth to power. Afraid to risk losing comfort, Esther was finally convinced that she had to speak for the voiceless. Consequently, by her "standing in the gap," she too was liberated.

*Leading Ladies* is a wonderfully affirming voice for women being called into leadership—whether in the church or not. The metaphors encourage the feminine and asserts the freedom of women who "step out on faith." As I read this book, I was



For me, the most poignant thread is that of the Weaver. In the book of Judges, Deborah rises to become a skillful, calculating and powerful leader for her people.

reminded of the various lives and sermons of those wonderful 19th century leading ladies. I have been moved with how Elizabeth, a slave whose last name was not important to remember, birthed the idea that the African was not only a person but also a spiritual person and capable of believing and knowing God. I have been inspired by Amanda Berry Smith and her reputation as the Singing Pilgrim. I imagine her songs dancing into the ears and down into the soles. I envision Zilpha Elaw rendering verbal portraits of her journey with Christ. I hear the voice of Jarena Lee as she spoke truth to her calling and for those women who would come after her. *Leading Ladies* is a book that every woman, every leader and every visionary should have in her/his library. The metaphors are emancipating visions that should inspire a struggling, insecure, or unborn leader. ♦



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## NEWS VERBS

**The Feminist Peace Network**, a discussion group devoted to feminist concepts of peace, invites you to become a member. It is open to women of all denominations, nationalities and persuasions willing to share ideas and work together across borders and cultures to achieve these goals. To subscribe, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FeministPeaceNetwork>, and follow the subscription information.

Goshen College is seeking a **women's basketball head coach** beginning July 1, 2002. For information about this position, please see their web site [www.goshen.edu](http://www.goshen.edu) under "Employment." ♦

### WOMEN'S CONCERNS REPORT

#### Looking Forward

**JULY–AUGUST 2002**

Women and AIDS



**SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 2002**

Women who have left  
the church



**NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2002**

An Anabaptist theology  
opposing violence  
against women

#### Women in leadership

Joan Bal was ordained at Houston Mennonite Church on January 27, 2002. Joan has been trained in spiritual direction and as a Pastoral Care Specialist. She is working towards the completion of her Master of Divinity and plans to work as a chaplain.